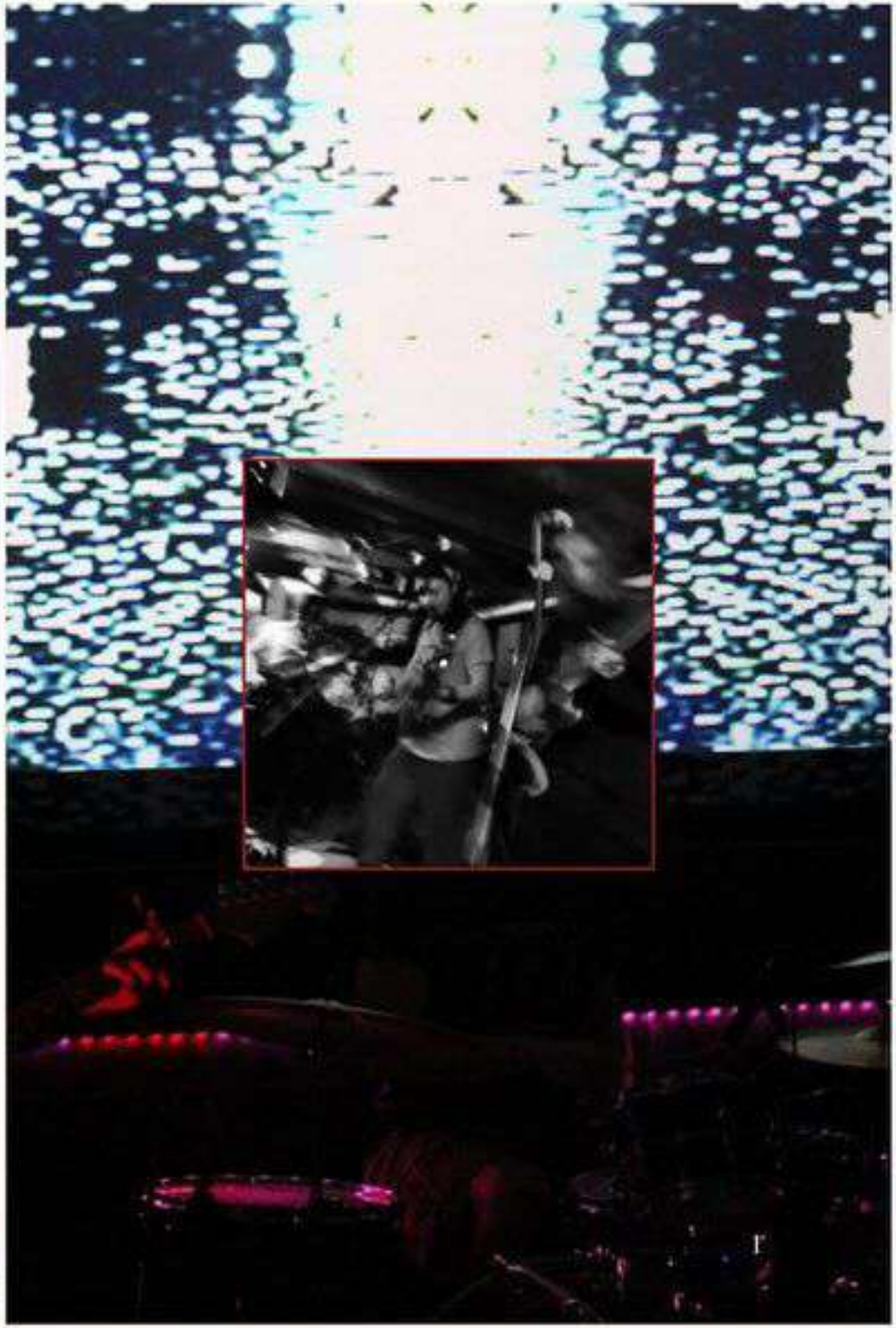


# THE RAT TRAP

Volume 1 Issue 1
September & October 2024

Anne Marie Vaudo @sticky_666
*editor, photography, Gross Girls spotlight*
Carson Moore
*editor*
Tommy Jordan
*short story*
Jason Richard
*visual art*
Hazel Simpson
*poetry*
Sophia Madera
*poetry*
@junkcauldron
*photography, inside cover*
@mi_rash_view
*photography*
Ryan Francis
*photography, Toboggan Fiasco spotlight, cover*
Maggie Dineen
*photography*

@therattrapmagazine



# A NOTE TO YOU...

There ain't nothing like a house show. If you've found yourself here you can probably attest to that. What we've strived to create is an homage to our lovely scene, and an extended leg of it, a relic of it, something that anyone can physically pick up. It's for anyone who wanted to pull back the basement curtain and know how their favorite Lowell band came about or how they make their music. As a friend recently said to me, people love stories.
More than that, we wanted it to be a hub for creativity. Because the music scene is the way it is because it's not just about the music it's about the artists, writers, photographers, organizers, thrashers and everybody else who makes the machine run. If you consider yourself as any of the above, please feel free to submit anything you've created or anything you want to say, really. This started as a vague idea and still is a vague idea, but, like anything else, it's nothing without the people.

There ain't nothing like a house show and there ain't nothing like the Lowell scene, and we hope this zine sparks that feeling for you, too.

xx the editors

# CONTENTS


| | |
|---|---|
| Happenings | 5 |
| Rat Joke by Tommy Jordan | 7 |
| Artist Spotlight: Gross Girls | 9 |
| Just Clownin Around by Jason Richard | 10 |
| Seasonal Predation by Sophia Madera | 11 |
| I followed Violet Up the Stairs by Anne Marie Vaudo | 12 |
| God, help the bitch who's in love by Hazel Simpson | 13 |
| Artist Spotlight: Toboggan Fiasco | 14 |
| Fly Swatter by Sophia Madera | 15 |
| Community Board | 16 |




# September Happenings

**9/7 Tango's** String Head, Gross Girls, Escape Durgin, Ryan Francis

**9/8 Taffeta** The P.A.'s, Winkler, Roaches

**9/13 The Valley** Vender Event 2-6pm

Escape Durgin by @sticky_666

Dragonfruit by @mi_rash_view

**9/13 Worthen Attic** Gross Girls

**9/20 Color of Nothing Release Show** with Eddie O'Sullivan and Róisín Queally dm @thehazeladeline for address

**9/21 Tango's** Screamo TBA

**9/21 Mystic River Fest, Medford 12pm** Lekha & Friends

**9/26 The Valley** Burp. Album Release Show

Jobie by sticky_666

Prince T'Challa by Maggie Dineen

**9/27 Tango's** Hardcore TBA

**9/27 Sol Sound & Stage** Bag, Already Dead, Tysk Tysk Task, Motel Art

**9/27 Taffeta** Mexican Slum Rats, Winona Forever, Israel's Arcade, Oddie

**9/28 Worthen Attic** Escape Durgin, Camp Creep, Declaw, Psych Ward Disco

# October Happenings

**10/04 Tango's** Oddie, TBA

**10/05 Worthen Attic** Colin Silva Band, Frogs, The Ghouls

**10/05 The Valley** Hazel Adeline, Nightvisions, Krixus

**10/06 Smokehouse Fuck Cancer Event** Stay at Home Dads

The Ghouls by @sticky_666

Thinkers by @junkcauldron

**10/11 Taffeta** Burp, Dear Maryanne, Gross Girls

**10/11 Barewolf Brewery** Stay at Home Dads

**10/18 Valley** Oddie, The P.A.'s,

**10/18 The Jungle** Escape Durgin

**10/19 Umass Rock For Tots** Gross Girls,

**10/19 Thirsty First Tavern** Punktoberfest

**10/24 Catwolf** Gross Girls,

**10/25 Barewolf Brewery** Oddie, Rabbits for Sale, Phantom Ocean

**10/25 Secret Show** Stay at Home Dads

subpunch by Maggie Dineen

*all events subject to change, check online edition for more updates



**Rat Joke**
**By Tommy Jordan**

Two rats walk into a bar. The bar is in the sewer; there's a tiny city in the sewer. It glows down there like a living dollhouse made of oil cans and scrap metal. How do they power the lights?

So there are rats in this bar, right? Yeah, there are two rats at the bar and they can't stop laughing because they have impeccable comedic chemistry. It's really cute. They're on a date, you see.

This first rat, Debloin, courted the other rat, let's call her Shermuppet, at an alternative post-grunge jazz-fusion noise-punk show. She was doing the twist like it was nobody's business and he thought that was just the proverbial bee's knees, man.

So they're seated at the bar and she's giggling and he's chortling. Our man Debloin wipes away a tear and turns to the bartender, who is also a rat, and says to him:

"Can I get another plate of human shit for me and the dame?"

The bartender turns to him and goes:

"Ah, er, um, ahem, sorry buddy. Kitchen's closed after nine."

Now Debloin, O Debloin, is downright peeved upon hearing this. He's a big human shit guy (a big fan of human shit, not a big guy made out of human shit or something ridiculous like that) and realizes immediately that there's an inconsistency in the bartender's claim. Debloin seizes the incompetent staffer by the scruff of his uniform and hoists him up towards the rafters.

"Hey bones-for-brains, the last time I was here I was told the kitchen closes at ten, waddaheckizupwiddat?"

Now, the bartender is scared because the uncouth knave known as Debloin is pretty jacked for a rodent and has quite a few drinks in him. The timing couldn't be worse either, because security is understaffed and the one door-rat they have on tap is home sick with the plague. It's up to the bartender to deescalate the situation on his own, I wonder what he'll say?

"Ahem, eherm, ummm listen friend, you gotta knock off all this funny business. I don't want to have to call the fuzz on you, so quit acting the part of a roguish bulwark or I'll have to ask you to shoot the boot and leave."

Debloin considers his options for thirty-seven-and-a-half seconds while the bar continues to chatter with conversation. Every vermin in the joint is sweating buckets due to the harsh rays bleeding from Christmas lights; each bulb is the size of their skulls. (Again, I ask, just what am I to believe is generating electricity down here?) The ambience is frantic as drunken clientele voraciously spatter conversation at one another over fermented pesticides that have been poured into thimbles and dishes of rotting fish with a side of expired toothpaste served on plates constructed of flattened tin bottle caps. They are yapping on about rat politics, corporate products, barbaric gossip, and decrees of carnal desire.

Outside, past the landmark exposed ribs and lollygagged tongue of a dog's carcass, godalas crafted from shoeboxes ferry feral lovers along streams of sewage that all rats know and loath. They live among poison. To be a rat is to profess bullshit and then carve it up for supper. Swarm the streets and run your tongue along the window sills of shopping malls. Decay with deliberateness; consume at a constant rate. Pollute. You were born to inhale resources and expel noxious gasses. Some crave extermination as each passing moment erodes their soul; waves lapping at a craggy bluff. Do rats have souls? Are we still talking about rats?

Back to Debloin: he has been disrespected, and booze, a phantom, tickles his ear, goading him on to destruction and violence, but his pride lacks priority. Shermuppet is the most pulchritudinous rat he has ever met, and he mustn't spoil this evening with brutish displays.

He turns to his stunning damsel for a verdict, admiring her frumious schnozz: her arrogant whiskers; her elegant gnaw-gnaws; and her bumptious, black eyes, but the capacity for mercy cannot be found behind them. With a twist of her wrist and jolt of her thumb, Shermuppet signals to her marauding squeeze that it is time to give the bartender his comeuppance.

With a swing of his right and a toss of his left, Debloin pummels the hapless rat behind the bar into unconsciousness.



# WHAT'S WITH THE MALE GAZE?

Gross Girls was conceived in the Fall of 2023 during a shared fever dream between two of their members and their love child is taking Lowell by storm. Akin to the likes of Liz Phair and Cyberbully Mom Club, this female-fronted band's unique sound and down-to-Earth yet edgy lyrics make them easily relatable and lovable; *Blood stain on the carpet, and it's starting to freak you out// I think about you often, and my feelings scare me*. Covering a range of topics from crushes to the female experience to familial issues, each song is real and vivid with a life within itself. Gross Girls don't shy away from expressing the plethora of feelings that come with what they sing about, cathartically wailing and howling together during the last minute or so of "Everybody Wants Him" as they rip on their instruments, always inviting the audience to join in.

They're as rough around the edges as they are a refined sound, overly blunt yet deeply driven by emotion. If they were a food, they're self described as both fruit roll ups and gogurt. If they were a color, they'd be hot pink. Their self-christened name could not be any more fitting; they reclaim gross as the new gnarly, and provide solace to anyone who's ever been made to feel bad about feeling too much and the messiness that comes with that.

"seasonal predation"
Sophia Madera

august creeps in like a predator,
stalking low through dry thistles,
awaiting just the right moment
to strike.
& i, humble prey,
am a slave to the food chain.

almighty apex,
holy, omnipotent autumn—
this beast is familiar with
every inch of my
ravaged body; a buzzard
harvesting my scraps.

fall is a creature of habit,
retiring to heirloom burrows
all stashed cozy with rusted razors
& dirty needles, on which,
in the desolate winter,
i feed.

i emerge from hibernation—
an emaciated april—
when acid rain flushes out
a crumbling den. i claw,
i scrape, but this belly
is far too starved.

the colder months leave me at death's door,
but it's spring that invites me in.

*I followed Violet Up the Stairs*
Anne Marie Vaudo



**God, help the bitch who's in love**
**Hazel Simpson**

God, help the bitch who's in love
With a girl who suckles passionately
The notes of a songbird in the dead heat
Of a sunset, tasting the marrow
From its melodious bones.
Harrowing hymns, harmonies, echo
From inside her stomach and lungs
Making Himalayan mountains
Out of treble clefs; ringing miles deep
Into the ears of a deity.

And as the soprano flicking of tines din,
Sharp and high through the ears
Of omnipotence, droplets of sky
Rain down upon the scape, tinged
A hue of orange from the setting sun.
The clouds all darken and gray,
Thunder cracks, groans,
And the bitch seethes in pain
As the cumulonimbus tears
pierce her skin raw.

God, help the bitch
Who sees pure, radiant beauty
In a song that makes gods cry;
A song sung by a ray of ultraviolet
In a burning, storming sky.
God, help the bitch
Who loves a love so strong
And unwavering, songbirds
And gods can't fathom
Its words and vibrations.
God, help the bitch
Drowning in a reflective pool
Of avian blood, gasping
For any oxygen left
In the humid summer air
As her love stagnantly
Watches from the bottom,
Waiting for embrace.

Toboggan Fiasco came about when 3 little kats were born around mid-2004. They enjoy various activities, such as holding hands, having fun, playing, skipping, and frolicking in vast fields of flowers into the sunset. These cats are named Ryan Francis, Josh Carmichael, and Lucas Brown. They first stumbled upon the name, "The Hat Boyz" as their band name, due to their extensive love for wearing such an apparatus on their head. However, they had to settle on the name Toboggan Fiasco due to the Prince of Darkness conflict. To this day, they are still best friends, taking on the liking of Thee Oh Sees, Frankie and the Witch Fingers, Ty Segall, and most importantly Spongebob. They have an album out called Josh Is The Prince of Darkness and are recording a new album coming out in January.

**"fly swatter"**
**Sophia Madera**

i sit on the patio, swatting bugs,
killing them against my skin.
i'm methodic & precise with it—
each flick & pinch, militaristic.

their microscopic guts &
blood from strangers
they've siphoned
burst out of them,
like bangers
on hot concrete.
it's the 4th of july sky
of insect innards on my arms.

i do not do it
out of joy,
out of some
compulsive pleasure—
i do it to
play toy-god.

& as i'm sat on some
three-legged milking stool,
crushing every mosquito
that dares kiss my thighs,
i wonder what really
sets me aside

*from the bully in the schoolyard,*
*magnifying glass in grubby hand,*
*frying ants on the blacktop—*
*from the grown man filling*
*the neighborhood strays*
*with lead for the fuck of it.*

*sometimes i sense*
*a great hand*
*hovering overhead of me,*
*waiting for me to remain*
*just still enough*
*to smoosh beneath its palm.*

*i'm unsure why it's so merciful.*
*i never have been.*

Volunteer and contribute resources to LLAMA Mutual Aid Group @lowellmutualaid on IG and Facebook

Free Monthly Distribution every last Sunday @ South Common

Hazel Adeline *Color of Nothing* out this Fall! Check out new single, "Paintings"

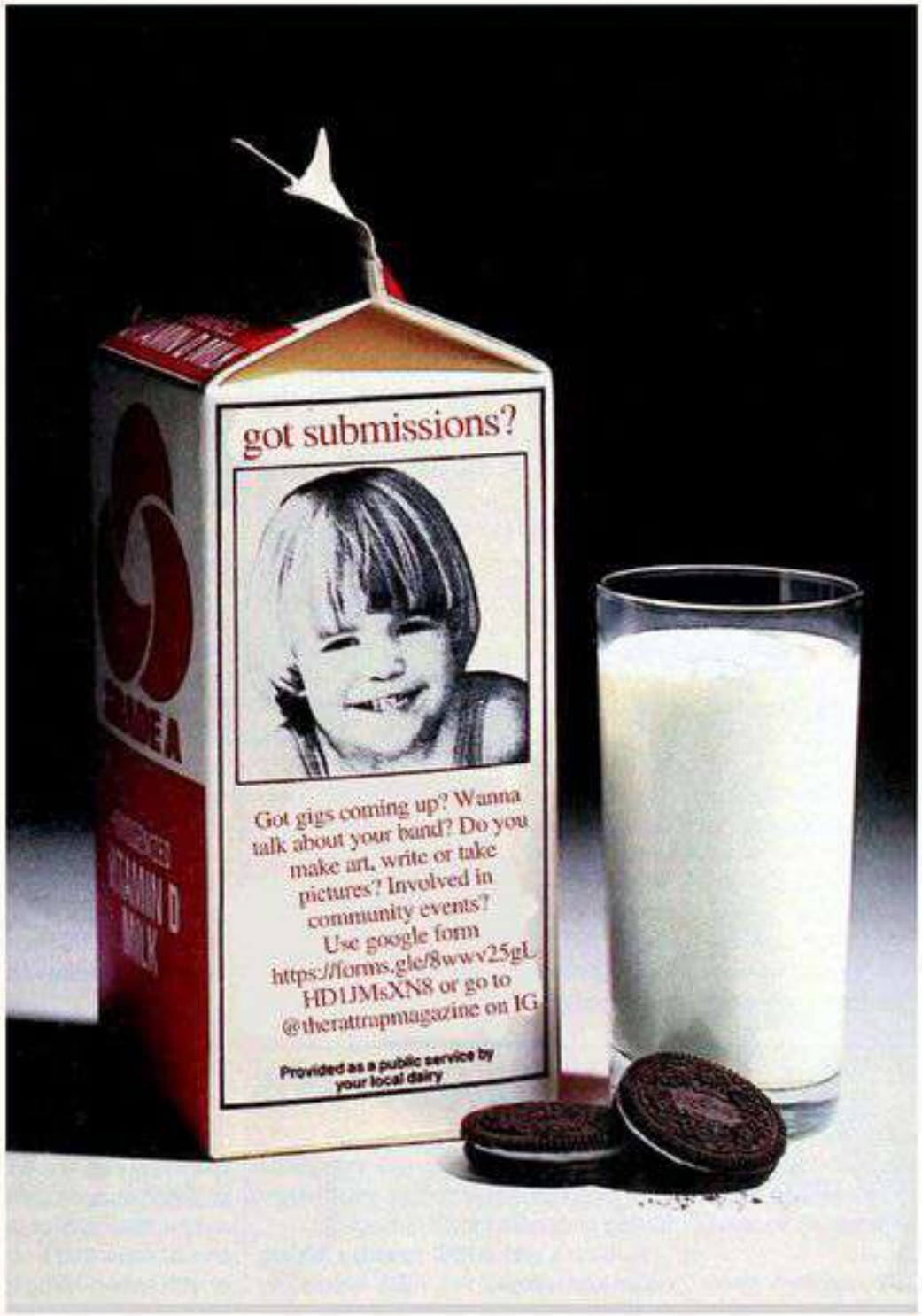
"Pocket of Gold" by The Ghouls out Sep 20

"Panic" by Dom the Composer out now!

*Acid Reflux* by Burp. out Sep 27

Gross Girls Album coming...

*Josh is the Prince of Darkness* by Toboggan Fiasco out on Spotify now!
New album in the making...


got submissions?
Got gigs coming up? Wanna talk about your band? Do you make art, write or take pictures? Involved in community events? Use google form https://forms.gle/8wwv25gL HD1JMsXN8 or go to @therattrapmagazine on IG
Provided as a public service by your local dairy